

Congregation Kehilat NEWS Shalom

A Welcoming Jewish Reconstructionist Community

Editor-in-Chief
Karen Bartels
newsletter@ksnj.org
home phone 609-921-1811

Newsletter of the Congregation Kehilat Shalom of Belle Mead, NJ **March 2019** Adar I – Adar II 5779

Congregation Kehilat Shalom

253 Griggstown Rd.
Belle Mead, NJ 08502
Phone: 908 -359 -0420
Fax: 908 -359 -8848

Rabbi

Jacob Best Adler
rabbi@ksnj.org

President

Steve Weinstein
president@ksnj.org

Administrator

Robin Bengochea
admin@ksnj.org

Religious School Principals

Ann Kanarek (K7)
principal@ksnj.org
Karen Fridkis(8-12)
kehiloftprincipal@ksnj.org

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TORAH GATHERING IN NYC

BY SUSAN WASKOW



On Tuesday, February 5, CKS joined in a gathering of Torahs at The Temple Emanu-El Streicker Center in Manhattan. It was the first-ever New York gathering of the Czech Holocaust Survivor Torahs. There were 72 survivor Torahs—including our own—which were part of a memorial and processional that marked the opening of their new exhibit: “The Guiding Hand.” The Guiding Hand features a collection of Yads (the pointers used by Torah readers) and other sacred objects.

Mike Arons, Karen Fridkis, and Susan Waskow chaperoned our scroll to this Torah processional. We found the event an amazing, moving experience. It began with taxis, minivans, sedans, SUVs, and pedestrians arriving at the entrance of Temple Emanu-El, a large Reform synagogue on East 65th street in Manhattan. We got a grasp of

the size of the event as we watched scroll after scroll arriving, each one delivered with love and reverence by its holders. The event featured a processional, of the 72 survivor Torahs, with over 800 people in attendance. After the processional we were able to view the Torahs in their display area. Torahs and congregations came from as far away as Washington state, California, and as local as Manhattan.

Our own Torah is MST #1268 (Memorial Scrolls Trust) from Brandys/Kostelec nad Labe. It is on loan from the MST with the understanding that if CKS can no longer care for the Torah, we are to return it to the MST. It shares a story along with the other Torahs. The following is excerpted from an article by Aleanna Cooper of Case Western Reserve University, as posted on the MST website.

“The scroll belongs to Memorial Scrolls Trust (MST), a London-based organization that serves as custodian for 1,564 Torah scrolls that were owned by Jewish communities in Czech lands prior to World War II, most of whom perished. When MST acquired this massive collection in 1964, the organization inventoried them, then sent them out to living congregations in the United States, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand. When the congregation in New Jersey – and others like it – took in their Czech scroll, MST stipulated that it was on “permanent loan.” This meant that the congregation could keep the Torah for as long as it wished, but only under certain conditions: The scroll could not be given away or sold. If the congregation wished to repair the scroll, the work had to be authorized by MST.”

There is a framed certificate in the rear of the CKS sanctuary which tells the story of our Torah. For more information on the story of the Memorial Scrolls Trust visit www.memorialscrollstrust.org. A more detailed story about our own CKS Torah is available at this link <http://pdf.kehilatshalomnj.org/2010-01.pdf>

The Guiding Hand exhibit will be on display through May 30 at Temple Emanu-El Strieker. <http://emanuelstreickernyc.org/events/the-guiding-hand/>

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CKS gratefully acknowledges the generosity of our members and friends.

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In honor of William's Bar Mitzvah
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BULLETIN FROM THE BOARD

Hello fellow CKS congregants. It is an honor to have the opportunity to write the article from the Board of Trustees this month. I have been a member of CKS for over 10 years. Over that time my involvement has grown and moved in different directions; I have served on committees, helped plan events and festivities throughout the years, participated in religious and cultural celebrations, and now have the chance to serve on the Board. I know I am the part of something meaningful and righteous along with you, the members of this community, a welcoming place that offers so much to so many which we accomplish by working together.

This week's Torah portion, Vayakhel, describes the physical construction of the Tabernacle, which was ordained by God through Moses. The Tabernacle was intended to be a place to commune with the Almighty. The lesson behind the labor, however, was that much can be accomplished when friends and neighbors band together for a common goal: to be part of something bigger, and reminding us that even the powerful and mighty benefit from assistance. Through the act of constructing the Mishnah, the Israelites were connecting with Hashem. By building the Tabernacle to the specifications of Hashem, they were honoring God's wishes, ensuring that divine presence would be felt. By contributing gifts as requested, the Israelites were given the opportunity to be the vessels for a sacred space which in turn would be their spiritual gift. The process enabled all involved to feel God's presence.

This Torah portion parallels my experience at CKS. I have been fortunate to participate in something bigger, identified with a cosmic force, and worked alongside my fellow congregants to perpetuate all CKS has to offer. My children attended religious school there, and my wife and I were fortunate to host our wedding ceremony there. The welcoming sense of community is tangible and is a sanctuary to myself and many others.

Just as life's one constant is change, the same applies to CKS. As a Reconstructionist community, our beliefs and practices evolve with an eye on the past. An additional constant for me is the joy and sense of belonging I feel each time I am able to contribute there and be connected to my modern day Tabernacle.

Larry Spinrad, Trustee

Come celebrate Purim with a Silly Shabbat!!

Come see what

Rabbi Jake has in store!!

Friday, March 22, 2019

Services start at 7:00 PM

All are welcome!!

Bring Friends and Family!!

FROM THE RABBI



There's something about the month of Adar – or, more correctly (at least this year), the months of Adar. On the Jewish calendar, the month of March 2019 begins on the 24th of Adar I and ends on the 24th of Adar II. Why is that?

It is one of the major quirks of a lunar calendar that since it is composed of twelve months of roughly 29-30 days each, it is significantly shorter than a solar calendar – typically coming in at around 354 days. In a purely lunar calendar, like the Islamic one, the year is simply 11 days shorter, meaning that the dates are not fixed to a specific season. You can see this in the way that the holiday of Ramadan can fall at any time of year, from the dead of winter to the hottest days of summer.

However, a true lunar calendar wouldn't work for the Jews, since so many of our holidays are closely tied to the seasons – can you imagine celebrating Chanukah in June, or Passover in November? In fact, the celebration of Passover is closely tied in Torah to the season of spring. Additionally, since Rosh Hashanah occurs exactly six months after the first of Nisan, the month of Passover, precision of the seasons is essential, so that we don't get the date of Rosh Hashanah (and, more significantly, Yom Kippur) wrong.

So the rabbis devised a solution. When the need arose (sometimes by simply observing that there was still frost on the ground), an extra month of Adar would be added to the calendar to preserve Passover's place in the spring. It may surprise you to learn that the "leap month" is not Adar II, but Adar I! Interestingly, given their frequency and proximity, there's about a 50/50 chance that someone born on a leap day (February 29) will also be born in a leap month on the Jewish calendar. The technical term for adding this "leap month" is intercalation. The Hebrew word for "intercalated" is *m'ubar* – which can also mean "pregnant!"

Our system of intercalation owes a debt to the Metonic cycle, a system in which a month is added seven times over the course of a 19-year cycle (in years 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17, and 19). This cycle probably comes from the Babylonians – and beyond its use in determining the Jewish calendar, is also used to determine the date of Easter – there's a reason that they always seem to occur around the same time!

The month of Adar is known as a time of increased joy – in the Talmud, we are told that when Adar begins, we should increase our rejoicing. Indeed, we have plenty to bring us joy in March – including a packed weekend at CKS around Purim – from Silly Shabbat on Friday, March 22, a Purim-themed Tot

Shabbat on March 23, and our Purim celebration on March 24, featuring a skit from Kehiloft (and maybe some other silliness...) and our Purim Carnival! We hope you'll join us for one or more of these moments of community (it's up to you if you decide to wear a costume)!

Rabbi Jake Best Adler



Tree of Life

Purchase a leaf for \$54 to celebrate a *simcha!* Each leaf includes three lines of engraving.

Contact CKS Office
908-359-0420



The CKS Gift Shop
is open each Sunday

11 am - 12 noon

when Deligious school is in session or by special request.

Questions?

Susan Waskow 609-333-1113

or Iris Rubinstein irubinstein@gmail.com

or the synagogue office for more information



Kindercapers

Now in its 26th full year, CKS's non-sectarian pre-school for children 2½ to 5 years old, offers a unique atmosphere, giving children a chance to explore, create, and most importantly, learn to think and reason.

For more information, call 908-359-0420





BE TRUE TO YOURSELF!

Purim encourages us to put on our costumes, to hide our real selves, and to become something else, if only for a short time. It is an opportunity to step outside of ourselves and then reclaim our true identities.

When we unpack the story of Purim, it's filled with people pretending to be what they are not: from the king's "loyal" cooks who plot to poison him to Haman's duplicity, as well as Esther's own hidden identity. For the story to have a happy ending, all of the characters must be unmasked, their true identities and nature revealed.

Mordechai's unmasking of the plotters against King Ahashverosh begins the process. Esther must reveal her identity as a Jew before she can plead for her life and those of her people. Haman's evil designs have to be exposed along with his self-serving goals. Recognition of Mordechai's loyalty and wisdom, as well as his connection to Esther, completes the process. Once the truth is apparent, Ahashverosh is able to choose correctly.

Even if you wear a mask and costume on Purim, you only create a new reality and identity for yourself for a brief time. It doesn't allow you to change your true identity or behave out of character. This is part of the enduring message of Purim--*be true to your own self.*

Ultimately, we know that Jewish survival demands that we assert our true selves; that we live consistently with the values of the Torah. When we live this way we can be like Mordechai, an asset to the Jewish community and a blessing to all people.

With best wishes for a happy and fun-filled Purim!



CELEBRATE

Our school will celebrate the fun-filled holiday of Purim on **Sunday, March 24**. All Nesiyot (religious school) students and parents are invited to join us in the Sanctuary at 10:15am for a Purim Shpiel by Kehiloft's "Not Yet Ready for Purim-Time Players." This will be followed by a costume parade and Purim activities at 11:00. People of all ages are encouraged to attend. There will be games, crafts, food, and prizes. Come and celebrate Purim and help support our School and Kehiloft program.

ATTENTION PARENTS OF K-3

If you have a child that is between the ages of 4 and 8 years old who is not yet registered in our Religious School, consider joining our religious school program. It offers activities that develop a child's Jewish identity and stimulate their Jewish involvement through music, art, cooking, and storytelling.

You are welcome to visit us during our **OPEN HOUSE on Sunday, March 24** and check out our school, visit our classrooms, meet our teachers, and enjoy the Purim celebration with us. We make the most of the hours that your child is with us. The children participate in extensive enrichment programs throughout the year as they get acquainted and become part of our religious school life. Many exciting events are already planned for the upcoming 2019-2020 school year.

Please call the school office (908-359-0420 x2) or email me (principal@ksnj.org) if you would like an application to enroll your child in our school.

Upcoming

Friday, March 1:	Shabbat Mishpachah, 7:00pm
Sunday, March 3	PACT-5/6 and 5th grade parent meeting; Yad workshop
Sunday, March 10:	K-3 Grandparent Day (10-12); Tefillah with the Rabbi
Sunday, March 17:	COOKING; Grades 5-7 Traveling Suitcase Program (10:30-12)
Sunday, March 24:	Purim shpiel (10:15-11) and Purim games (with Kehiloft teens (11-12); OPEN HOUSE
Sunday, March 31:	Regular school session
Friday, April 5:	Shabbat Mishpachah, 7:00pm
Sunday, April 7:	Tefillah with the Rabbi; COOKING; <i>Bring a friend to School</i>

Turn to page 7 for pictures of the "Torah Torah Torah" program from February

KEHILOFT-THE NEXT STEP IN YOUR JEWISH JOURNEY



Hi everyone! I'm Olivia Mahoney and this is my second year in Kehiloft. I am also a madrichim in the 5th and 6th grade class! Being in Kehiloft has been a lot of fun and not only do we get to study the torah, but

also have a lot fun hanging out with friends. At the last Kehiloft meeting, we covered a lot of different topics so I am going to jump right in.

Recently, the Kehilofters lead a Shabbat service from the Torah portion Beshalach. This Torah portion talked about how G-d tested the Jews with a hope that they would have faith and trust in G-d no matter the circumstance. After looking closely at this Torah portion, we decided on doing a skit with liquid characters. In short, this meant that there were no defined roles, so every Kehiloft member played a bunch of different roles. The Kehiloft skits are always fun to create and perform and we hope that everyone in the congregation enjoys them as much as we do.

We also started preparing for the Family Workshop for the 7th graders inviting them to join Kehiloft. seventh grade is a time when you are very excited, nervous and maybe a little stressed for your Bar or Bat Mitzvah. This workshop is to introduce the 7th graders to all of the Kehilofters and to answer any of their questions about the leadership program.

Kehiloft is also starting to think about ideas for the annual project. We have it narrowed down to two ideas and are looking forward to put the ideas into action as soon as we can!

Purim is coming soon, and you know that means, a new and exciting Kehiloft Purim Spiel and some awesome games for the Carnival. We hope everyone in the Religious School is excited for this fun-filled day. Kehiloft is hosting another costume parade, so don't forget to dress up! Not only is the Purim spiel a little more fabulous than last year, but Kehiloft is also starting some new games! What time is the Purim spiel you ask, well the spiel is on March 24th at 10:15 am. You can bet on it that you will be smiling as you walk away from the synagogue.

Lately, Kehiloft had a movie night showing Parental Guidance, a movie about a set of grandparents facing obstacles as they take care of the grandchildren. We hope everyone had as much as fun as we did!

Olivia Mahoney

MARCH

Wednesday, March 13 - Purim rehearsal #2

Wednesday, March 20 - Purim rehearsal #3

Sunday, March 24 - 10:15 - 11:00 Purim spiel performed in Religious School

Sunday, March 24 - 11:00 - 12:00 Purim games run by Kehiloft

APRIL

Wednesday, April 3 - Shabbat prep

Friday, April 12 - Kehiloft leads Shabbat service #3

Wednesday, April 17 - Rabbi Jake leads discussion #3

Passover break

The student board meets on Wednesdays from 8:00 - 8:30.

Karen Fridhis, Kehiloft Principal

Camp Havaya Visits CKS

CKS congregants and friends got a taste of what it's like to be a camper at the Reconstructionist summer haven Camp Havaya at a special late afternoon service on Saturday, February 9th. Rabbi Jake led a group of about 40 participants of all ages in a short Mincha service, followed by a wonderful Israeli-style dinner that was sponsored by the folks from Camp Havaya, featuring falafel, pita bread, hummus, baba ghanoush, and tabbouleh. There were donuts for dessert and a yummy lemon poppy Bundt cake from CKS member and baker extraordinaire Juliet Strauss.

Afterwards, we heard from camp director Sheira Director-Nowack, who told us about this wonderful facility, its diversity, and how open and welcoming it is to a wide range of children (age 4-1/2 to 15). Then we watched a video showcasing campers and the various activities in which they partake. A lot of great testimonials from campers and staff alike were infused throughout. Scholarships are available for campers, as well as a special partial scholarship for new campers who spend at least three weeks at Camp Havaya. Contact the CKS office for more information.

Following the presentation, we got to experience a Camp Havaya-style Havdala service, joining hands as we entered the sanctuary, singing songs in a circle, and sharing the ritual of passing around and smelling the spice box, lighting the braided, multi-wicked candle and putting it out at the end of Shabbat. We all left with the final song buzzing in our ears: "Everybody loves Saturday Night!"

Hilary Crist

ADULT EDUCATION



Jews and the Civil War

Rabbi Jake led an informative and interactive lecture with discussion on Jews and the Civil War.

He dedicated his presentation in memory of

Robert F. Southard, a professor of history and Jewish studies at Earlham College.

Did Jews own slaves? Who was Judah P. Benjamin? Why was Charleston, SC home to the largest Jewish population for a time? Was there anti-Semitism? How many Jews fought for the Union versus the Confederacy? These were just a few of the many topics raised. There was an in depth discussion of General Ulysses Grant's short lived Order #11 leading to the expulsion of Jews in certain areas, including the entire Jewish population of Paducah, Kentucky and how the leaders of the Abolitionist movement were involved in trying to convert Jews.

We broke off into small groups for text study on Morris J. Raphall, orthodox Rabbi of B'nai Jeshurun in NYC who was the first Jew to offer a public prayer in congress; David Einhorn, a radical Reform Rabbi in Baltimore and his rebuttal; and Maximillian Michelbacher who composed a prayer for Jewish confederate soldiers.

We came away from the session with a deeper understanding regarding Jews and slavery, antisemitism in Congress during the war and what it was like to be Jewish in the Union versus the Confederacy.

By *Rachael Apanovitch*



RESCUE AND RESISTANCE IN THE HOLOCAUST

Sunday, March 17th, 9:30 am

Learn about the people from all walks of life who risked their lives to help Jewish people in the Holocaust, and then about the Jewish self-help and resistance efforts that are often but a side-note in history books, even though they saved the lives of so many individuals and families.

Presented by Emily Bengels



"Jews and the Civil War" participants

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MARCH 2019



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1 Shabbat Mishpachah (Family Shabbat)	2 Shabbat Across America
3 Religious School	4 Mah-Jongg	5 CKS Knitting & Crafter's Group	6 Adult B'nei Mitzvah Class	7	8 Shabbat Services	9
10 Religious School	11 Mah-Jongg	12 Adult B'nei Mitzvah Class	13 Kehiloft Kehiloft – Student Board	14 Board Meeting	15 Shabbat Services	16 Torah Study Progressive Dinner (tentative)
17 Religious School Adult Education: Spiritual Resistance in the Holocaust	18 Mah-Jongg	19 Adult B'nei Mitzvah Class	20 Kehiloft Ritual Committee Meeting Kehiloft – Student Board	21 CKS Knitting & Crafter's Group	22 Congregational Purim Potluck Dinner Silly Shabbat Services	23
24 Religious School CKS Open House Kehiloft Purim Spiel / Carnival	25 Mah-Jongg	26	27	28 CKS Book Club – "Clock Dance" by Ann Tyler	29 Shabbat Services	30
31 Religious School						

Torah is the Heart of our Jewish people and the Jewish people --- the Heart of the Torah!



Fulfilling the religious, educational and social needs of our Jewish community since 1982.

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 Subscribe to our weekly emails:
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March 2019

CONTACT LIST		
Adult Education Committee	Susan Waskow	adulted@ksnj.org
Beautification Committee	Debbie Gartenberg	beautification@ksnj.org
B'nai Mitzvah	Iris Rubinstein	bneimitzvah@ksnj.org
Billing & Payments	Robin Bengochea	admin@ksnj.org
Board of Trustees	Steven Weinstein	president@ksnj.org
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Education Committee	Christine Witt	education@ksnj.org
Email & Weekly Bulletin	Robin Bengochea	admin@ksnj.org
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Fundraising Committee		
Gift Shop	Iris Rubinstein	giftshop@ksnj.org
Hospitality (Kiddush & Oneg)	Robin Bengochea	admin@ksnj.org
Kinderappers	Natalie London Bob Neusner	kinderappers@ksnj.org
Kehiloft	Karen Fridkis	kehiloftprincipal@ksnj.org
Life Cycle (Caring for Each Other)	Sheryl Rosenberg	908-253-7049 lifecycle@ksnj.org
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Network and Hardware	Michael Galkin	908-281-4499
Newsletter	Karen Bartels	newsletter@ksnj.org
Pastoral Emergencies	Rabbi Jake Best Adler	rabbi@ksnj.org
Religious School Principal	Ann Kanarek	principal@ksnj.org
Ritual Committee	Scott Strauss Marvin Schuldiner	ritual@ksnj.org
Tikkun Olam Committee	Janis Barondess Todd	tikkunolam@ksnj.org
Website and Social Media	Amy Rosenthal	website@ksnj.org

CKS Office Phone:

908-359-0420

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